

## late for pick up

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## late for pick up

by [effervescentlies](#)

### Summary

Day 4: Kid Fic, "So... wanna make out?"

*Dream settles for: "You're really cute." His eyes go wide. "Wait — no, I mean — fuck."*

*George's mouth falls open. "What?"*

*"I meant to say, that's really cute, but I don't think that's any better." Dream buries his head in his arms, resting on the desk. "I am so sorry," he groans.*

Or: Dream has a silly little crush on the father of one of his students, and he just can't seem to act *normal* around him.

### Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

"Jackson, *no*, you can't put that in your mouth." Dream rushes over and pulls the toy out of the boy's hands. "C'mon, go play with your friends."

The classroom is buzzing with activity — children roll toy cars on the play mat, scribble in pages

of cartoon illustrations at the art centre, and mess with colourful magnets on the whiteboard. Dream stands up and surveys his students, watching as they shriek and giggle with delight.

“Alright boys and girls, eyes on me,” he announces, placing a finger to his lips. The giggles fade out and the children shush their peers, watching Dream with wide eyes. “It’s almost the end of the day, so we’re all going to help clean up. And then we’re all going to get ready to head home.”

His students nod and start placing everything back where they found it. Markers are capped back up, plastic toys are stashed back inside their baskets, and Dream helps with placing arts and crafts supplies in cabinets high above the children’s reach.

“Are you ready to head home, Charlotte?” Dream asks, kneeling by the cubbies.

“Yes,” the girl giggles. She slips her backpack on and sits on the bench, kicking her feet up. “Can you — can you help my shoes?”

“You want me to help you put on your shoes?” Dream asks, and when the girl nods an affirmative yes he slips the pair of Mary Janes onto her feet.

“My daddy is picking me up today,” Charlotte announces unprompted.

“Oh?” he asks, raising an eyebrow. “Is your grandma busy today?”

“No, but my daddy, he has work early today,” she says slowly, trying to think of the right words. She kicks her left foot up after Dream buckles it tight, and he flinches backwards.

“Well, I’m excited to meet him,” Dream answers. He finishes buckling the last shoe and looks up at her. “All done.”

“Thank you,” she says sweetly, and Dream replies with an earnest “you’re welcome” — because manners are always important to teach, even when a five-year-old girl nearly kicks you in the face.

Dream rises from his position and looks out the window. There are already parents walking up to the door, ready to pick up their kids. He waves to them and sends the children outside, watching as they run towards their guardians.

The children in the cubby room dwindle down quickly as they leave with their parents, hand in hand. Soon, the only two people left in the classroom are Charlotte and Dream.

“Charlotte,” Dream frowns, peering outside, “are you sure your daddy is coming to pick you up today?”

On the bench, she crosses her arms petulantly. “Yes,” she insists, “he said it to me.”

“Okay, I just don’t see him,” he mutters. “We’ll wait five more minutes, and then if he’s not here I’ll take you to the office, okay?”

Charlotte nods, and Dream moves to pack up his bag for the day — until he’s rudely interrupted by the sound of knocking on glass. Charlotte squeals and jumps to her feet.

“Is that your daddy?” Dream asks, opening the door, but Charlotte doesn’t get the chance to answer —

Because *oh no, he’s cute.*

Dream doesn’t know what he expected Charlotte’s dad to look like. If anything, he thought he’d be

a strange-looking, slightly younger version of Charlotte's grandma — like from one of those crappy photo editing apps that seem to plague Dream's phone every time he wants a quick laugh.

Instead, he's a twenty-something year-old guy with messy brown hair and sparkly eyes and a bright smile, and he looks kind of dumb dressed in slacks and a baby blue button up, but who's to say that's a bad thing?

"Hi, I'm here to pick up Charlotte?" he asks. Pathetically, Dream has to mentally slap himself out of his frozen stupor.

"Daddy!" Charlotte exclaims, and she slips right past Dream and hugs her dad's legs tight.

He bends down and hugs her tight — the very sight puts a smile on Dream's face. "Did you have a good day at school?"

"Yes," Charlotte replies, grinning toothily.

"What did you learn today?"

"Time and clocks and weather," she rambles excitedly, pressing both her hands to her dad's face. He takes them off gently and returns her smile.

"She's doing really well," Dream pipes up, awkwardly wringing his hands when father and daughter turn their heads to look at him. "With, uh, reading the clock and all that."

"That's great," Charlotte's dad says. "Here, Charlotte, let me." He stands back up and takes Charlotte's backpack from her, a sparkly blue one that's far too big for her stature, slinging it over his own shoulder.

Dream holds out a hand. "You're Charlotte's dad, right? Mr... "

"Yeah," he says, and shakes Dream's hand politely. "You can just call me George, though. I never really liked being called by my last name."

"Oh," Dream sounds. He has to fight to keep the grip of his handshake steady. "You can just call me Dream, then."

George pulls his hand away and stuffs it in his back pocket. "Well, it was nice meeting you. Say bye to your teacher, Charlotte."

"Bye!" she says, waving enthusiastically.

Dream waves back with equal vigor. "Bye, Charlotte. See you tomorrow!"

And as Dream shuts the door and heads back inside, watching the backs of George and Charlotte as they go, Dream thinks he's very, very lucky that this was a one-time thing. He'll never see George again, and his stupid little infatuation (on a *student's father!*) will disappear as quickly as his students lose their Lego bricks.

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That is, until George shows up again the next day.

"Sorry," he says, slightly out of breath as Dream opens the door. "I got stuck at work."

"It's no problem," Dream says, even though it is very much a problem. "Charlotte! It's time to go home!"

Charlotte, just like yesterday, throws herself against her dad's legs and squeezes tight.

"Did you have a good day at school?" George asks. He smiles, lips tugged up at the corners, and Dream thinks, *shit*.

"Yes!" Charlotte nods.

"Did you finish your lunch?"

Charlotte suddenly looks very suspicious, her eyes shifty. "...No?"

George tilts his head and sighs. "You need to finish your lunch, Char. It's good for you. How else are you meant to grow big and strong?" He tickles her on the stomach, and she squirms in a fit of giggles. It's terribly, terribly adorable. "Promise me you'll finish your lunch."

"No!" Charlotte squeals.

"I'm not going to stop tickling you until you say yes," George says with a grin.

And, impulsively, Dream blurts: "You two are adorable."

Oops.

"Thank you," George says, somehow completely unphased, turning towards Charlotte. "Are you going to eat your lunch next time?"

"Yes," she giggles, finally. George loops her backpack straps on his arm and stands back up.

"So... uh," Dream starts, desperate to make some kind of conversation. "Are you going to be picking up Charlotte more often now?"

"Yeah," George says. He brushes his hair out of his face. "I just changed my hours around at work."

"Oh," Dream sounds, because *oh*, this silly crush is something he's actually going to have to deal with. "That's nice."

"It is," George says readily. "I'm sorry that I'm ten minutes late again. My shift doesn't end until three, and with driving and everything, it just takes a while to get here."

"That's okay," Dream says. "Charlotte and I can wait, right?"

"Right!" Charlotte exclaims.

Except Dream isn't really allowed to wait. It's some school board policy to avoid anything bad happening to the children at the end of the school day. But he doesn't mention it — how else is he meant to speak to George?

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As weeks go by, Dream's kindergarten classroom slowly begins to fill with colourful drawings and worksheets. George comes every day after school, albeit slightly late, and repeats the same pattern every time: he gives Charlotte a hug, asks her about her day, makes polite conversation with Dream, and then leaves while Dream sighs wistfully from a distance.

It's a little bit pathetic that Dream's crush on a student's parent has gotten to this point, and that one of Dream's favourite parts of the day is seeing George at pick up. But he keeps his infatuation

a secret, and he's sure that it'll fade away over time.

He is also sorely wrong.

Open house night rolls around, where parents come into the school to see the classrooms and speak to the teachers about their children's progress. That afternoon, Dream makes sure to give a quick announcement to his students.

"And remember, boys and girls, that open house night is today! So if your parents want to come in and talk to me, or they want to come visit our beautiful classroom, show them the papers we put in your folders last week, okay?" Sitting criss-crossed on the carpet, Dream's students nod enthusiastically. Charlotte raises her hand. "Yes, Charlotte, you had a question?"

"My daddy is coming today," she announces proudly.

For some reason, Dream is surprised. He shouldn't be, really, should've expected George to come visit like most other parents and guardians. The students delve into chaos, shouting claims over each other that moms, uncles, and grandparents are all coming to the open house.

Dream just sits there and hopes that he'll be able to actually have a full conversation with George without making a fool of himself.

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As it turns out, he can't.

"Uh, this — this is Charlotte's drawing, it's very nice, she drew this last week, I think? Or two weeks ago. It could be last month. Do you think it was last month?" Dream gestures towards Charlotte's painting, pinned on a corkboard with colourful thumbtacks.

George looks confused. "Last month?"

"Yeah, you're right. It could have been last month," Dream agrees.

Lifting an eyebrow, George says, "It could have been."

The classroom is all organized, developmental toys and books all neatly stored away. Arts and crafts projects sit on round, square, and triangle tables, labelled with the names of each student. The chatter of other parents fades into the background.

"Did you have any questions or anything? About Charlotte, or the classroom, or me, even?" Dream rambles.

"Not really," George says, looking up at Charlotte's painting. "I mean, she's doing well, right? She has friends and she's keeping up with her classmates?"

"Yeah, actually. She's doing well in every subject," Dream replies. "You've raised a really smart girl."

"Thank you," George replies. "I really can't take too much credit though."

Dream frowns. "Why not?"

"My mum is the one who spends the most time with Charlotte, since I'm at work all the time." George sighs. "I'm trying to change that, though."

"It's like... a joint effort then, right?" Dream offers awkwardly.

George laughs a little. “Yeah, maybe.”

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The next time George shows up at pick up afterschool, it’s thundering with intense winds outside. He’s late again, but it’s to be expected at this point, so Dream keeps Charlotte occupied with a picture book while they wait.

“Fuck,” Dream hears someone curse from outside, muffled through the glass and the sound of the rain *tap tap tapping* on the window. Normally, he’d ask them to quiet down (for the sake of the kids!), but when he peeks through the window, George is standing there, desperately fiddling with his umbrella.

“Charlotte, can you please put away your book for me?” Dream calls as he walks towards the door.

He pulls it open. George stands in the doorway, hair windswept and dripping wet, and Dream stares a little too long before he says, breathlessly, “Hi.”

“Can I —” George says, gesturing inside. Dream steps aside to let him in. “It’s *pouring* outside. My umbrella broke.” He holds it up, and the ribs of the umbrella have been bent out of shape, the canopy detached.

“Florida gets like this sometimes,” Dream says. “It’s... not the best.”

George shakes himself off a little on the mat. Literally — he shakes the rainwater off of his hair like a wet dog. “Where’s Charlotte?”

Dream’s heart drops a little every time George cuts their conversation short like that, but he answers, “Uh, she’s putting away her book right now, I’ll go get her.”

When Dream steps out of the cubby area, calling Charlotte to go to the door, his eyes catch on his desk area. His own umbrella leans against the white brick walls, hidden in the corner.

Without a second thought, he grabs it.

At the door, Dream holds the umbrella out. It sways back and forth in his grip. “Here, take my umbrella. You can keep it.”

“Don’t you need one with you to go home?” George asks. His hair falls into wet curls on his forehead, and Dream thinks that maybe he *shouldn’t* give George his umbrella if it means his hair will look like that more often.

But it’s too late now, so Dream says, “I have an extra one. Really, take it. I don’t want you to get sick.”

“Oh,” George says, voice quiet behind the sounds of pitter-pattering rain. “Well, thank you.”

“Thank you,” Charlotte chimes.

And Dream says, “No problem.”

Here is the thing about Dream’s extra umbrella: Dream does not have an extra umbrella.

He walks to his car in shame that day, a jacket held high above his head and fluttering in the wind.

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Dream’s little crush simmers down after that, still a little ashamed over what Dream refers to as *The*

*Umbrella Incident.* He just hopes that George will see it as a simple act of kindness rather than a dramatic proclamation of love.

Especially now, when George is sitting in his classroom. Alone. Right in front of him.

“It’s my first parent-teacher interview night,” George admits, shifting a little in his chair.

“Mine too,” Dream says quickly. “I’m a new teacher here. My first year.”

“Cool.” George nods. “Nice.”

“Nice,” Dream repeats, avoiding eye contact by scrolling through the notes on his laptop. “Well, Charlotte’s doing great,” he adds.

“That’s good,” George comments.

“I mean, her strong suit is really numbers and counting. And she shows a lot of interest in science.”

George smiles at that. “She makes me read science books to her at bedtime.”

“Yeah?”

“She likes the ones from the library, with lots of pictures,” George adds.

He looks nice like this, Dream thinks, all smiley and happy. The way he talks about his daughter is incredibly, incredibly sweet, and Dream wants to tell him that, express it in a meaningful way.

Dream settles for: “You’re really cute.” His eyes go wide. “Wait — no, I mean — fuck.”

George’s mouth falls open. “What?”

*Holy shit.*

“I meant to say, that’s really cute, but I don’t think that’s any better.” Dream buries his head in his arms, resting on the desk. “I am so sorry,” he groans.

There’s no answer for a moment. The classroom is dead silent. Dream opens his mouth to apologize profusely.

And then George starts *laughing*, giggling at Dream’s slip-up like it’s the funniest thing in the world. Dream wants to thump his head on the table and never look up, until George adds, “If it makes you feel any better, I think you’re really cute too.”

Dream lifts his head, and it’s his turn to say, “What?”

“I think you’re cute,” George replies. “It’s like... what do people call it? Endearing? When you’re all awkward like that.”

Dream has to stop himself from screaming.

“Thank you?”

With the same level of uncertainty, George replies, “You’re welcome.”

“I mean — I think you’re cute too,” Dream rushes to say, sitting up straighter in his chair. “A lot.”

George nods solemnly. “We’re both in agreement, then. We’re both cute.”

“I — I mean I guess,” Dream says slowly, mind still absolutely *reeling*. And then: “So... wanna make out?”

“Oh my *god*, Dream, not *here*,” George laughs. “We’re supposed to be *interviewing* right now.”

Dream blinks. “Is that a yes?”

George grins. “Maybe. Let’s finish the interview, first.”

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“Charlotte! How was your day?”

Dream watches from his desk as George swoops his daughter — *their* daughter, soon — up into the air.

“Fun,” Charlotte giggles, resting her head on George’s shoulder.

“She missed you. She was talking about you all day, you know,” Dream says knowingly.

“You missed me?” George asks, surprised, and Charlotte nods. They share matching smiles, matching eyes sparkling with laughter. He sets her down gently on the ground. “Dream, are you ready to go home?”

“Almost,” Dream calls. “I get so many emails, it’s insane.” He furrows his eyebrows and types a little faster on the keyboard. “How was your day at work?”

“Actually,” George starts slowly, “I... quit.”

“You quit?”

“Yeah,” George breathes. “I didn’t like it there. I was working... way too long every day. And the pay wasn’t that good, either.”

“That’s a good thing then,” Dream interrupts. “Right?”

“Yeah. No more calling my mum and asking her to take care of Charlotte when we’re both at work.” George huffs, smiling.

“No more dress shirts and pants.”

“No more *uncomfortable* dress shirts and pants,” George repeats. “I don’t know. I think it was a good decision.”

“You’ll have more time with Charlotte,” Dream points out.

“Yeah, that’s... one of the main reasons why I quit, actually. I felt *bad*, not being able to be around enough for her.” George sighs and shakes his head.

“We’ll make it work,” Dream assures him. “We’ll figure something out.”

George smiles.

“Daddy, can we *go home*,” Charlotte begs, tugging on George’s arm. “I’m *hungry*.”

Dream finishes replying to his last email and shuts his laptop. “Yeah, *daddy*.”

“Oh my god,” George laughs, “you’re disgusting. What the fuck is wrong with you?”



“Don’t *say that* in front of her,” Dream scolds, grabbing his things. “Okay, ready to go home?”

“Yeah,” Charlotte answers.

This time, Dream is the one to take Charlotte’s sparkly backpack from her. He slings it over his shoulders and holds Charlotte’s tiny hand, leading her to the front door.

And, as the three of them leave school together hand-in-hand, Dream’s heart swells a little. He gives Charlotte’s hand a little squeeze and offers a soft smile to George. George smiles back.

## End Notes

something short and sweet again! i don't usually write or read kid fic but this was fun!!

i am pushing the "messy hair george + HOLY COW dream" agenda that happened during the cooking stream

you can all thank @OverTheJune for the "daddy" in the last scene HAHAHA

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